

US 12 project

February 3, 2000 public information meeting comments

The following are comments from citizens responding to the February 3 meeting:

Comments from Middleton residents and concerned public:

- Representatives were friendly and polite and listened respectfully to concerns. Maps were helpful and well presented. Thanks for the good effort to handle a difficult job.
- Would like to have access (internet or otherwise) to maps of proposed route, particularly County K to Middleton portion. Can it be mailed?
- A more detailed map of the planned route would be nice to have.
- I would like a graphic file of the project. I get a lot of questions I can field when I have a current plan to work from.
- Are there going to be any walls or ways to cut noise? I live near the US 12/Greenway intersection. The road finishing makes a singing noise. It's so loud my neighbor doesn't go out in his yard. What is the acceptable noise level? How can a citizen have the sound monitored?
- I am still very concerned about the lack of an on-ramp to get back on the highway going toward Madison. Having all traffic use the Airport Road Interchange is not the best scenario for businesses on existing US 12. I also would like to know how and where I will be able to advertise my motel on DOT signs saying lodging next exit. I must have a sign from each direction in order for my customers to find me. Signage will be crucial to my future.
- Where or how can I access documentation on the historical archeological site along the proposed roadway?
- I've already talked to you regarding sound barriers just prior to the new road. How can I get an assessment of noise levels? I already know levels which injure hearing etc. Merge lights on Airport Road similar to Old Sauk Road.
- Send newsletter and fact sheet.
- Put me on your US 12 update mail list! Make sure Middleton Business Community (along B 12 US 12) are dealt with in a fair manner! Have ample opportunity for highway signage, decent price if they have to move etc.! Be nice to everyone along the new route! Keep articles in papers!
- Strongly suggest that traffic lights be at the new exit ramps at future Airport Road exchange. The need for lights has already been determined for the Old Sauk exchange the future Airport Road will be even worse. Plan ahead for lights now. Sound barriers also need to be considered. It would have been very helpful to have copies of the plans available to bring home. Needed reduced versions of what we were looking at to bring with us.
- Airport Road needs to have a stop light at the off/on ramp. Very busy intersection. They should coincide the traffic with the traffic flow. They should also have traffic lights at the exits at Old Sauk Road and Mineral Point due to the many new homes. Sound barriers need to be considered.
- I am very pleased to see this project going ahead on a consensus basis after so much controversy. Everyone involved deserved a lot of credit. I am looking forward to driving it one of these days.

Comment from Cross Plains:

- Could you please mail a map showing the existing and proposed US 12 when it becomes available?

Comments from Madison:

- Concerning the road right of way on the Springfield Hill on the N.E. corner of my property. I was informed that the whole wood lot would have to be removed to provide line of sight to the old US 12 connector road to the new US 12. This seems excessive to me as there are some nice oak trees in this wood lot, remnant of when the top of the moraine was an Oak Savannah plant community. Can't the trees near to the top of the new grade remain? I am in favor of the new highway, but let's not leave a sterile countryside in the wake of construction. I would like to be contacted on this concern.
- I attended the Information Session on the new US 12 at Middleton H.S. last Thursday and liked what I saw. I have two comments on the proposed bike path. I know its terminal point was recently extended from Hwy 19 to Rauls Road because of the heavy traffic on 19. But this means that bicyclists going through to Sauk City on local roads will have to double back on Rauls Road to the Lodi-Springfield road. If the bike path could be extended just a couple of hundred yards further to Simpson Road, that would give a much better, more or less direct connection to Sauk City on local roads. My other comment concerns placement of the bike path. A recent bike path in New York City was placed next to the roadway when it obviously should have been along the waterfront, prompting the letter below to the editor of the New York Times. I know you're probably pretty constrained in what you can do here but I just wan to emphasize the following point. When you offer recreational bikers the luxury of a dedicated bike path (as opposed to a paved shoulder for more experienced riders), the greater the separation of the path from the roadway, the more pleasant the bicycling experience will be.

Comment from Waunakee:

- I think that you have done an excellent job designing and planning the US 12 expansion project. Wouldn't it be nice if highway engineers had more input than politicians? My chief concern is that I would like to see access to/from Lodi Springfield Road be closed. Too much traffic now on L-S Road.

Comments from various property owners:

- The end of Herbrand Road is being moved away from my field. I would like a slight change so that I may have direct access. Alter the bend a little south so that I can have a field entrance from the access road provided for my neighbors. (After the north corner of the field).
- The safe super two lane alternative should be substituted for the four-lane express way proposal.
- It seems very short-sighted to discuss all of the traffic that these improvements will generate right into downtown Sauk City. Be realistic now and include the cost of by-passing Sauk to the south.
- With the north corridor proposed should some of the town roads be dead ended (Fisher, Meffert, Riles) to direct through traffic toward that highway?

The following comments were received via e-mail:

- Representing the Bike Federation, I want to make it clear that maintaining bicycle routes along and through this corridor is very important - especially as the corridor comes into urban areas. These local, secondary town roads are often the first roads to be closed off, turned into on/off ramps, or frontage roads. This will destroy the bicycle routes in this area. The path along side US 12 will provide bicycle accommodation but will not be as pleasant as a parallel local road. Further more the sheer volume of this roadway is bound to increase traffic on these great local roads. In addition, roadways that cross US 12

should be saved as bicycle routes - so bicycles can safely cross the highway without having to go several miles in either direction to find access across. So many of the roads like Schneider and Lodi-Springfield will see a HUGE increase in traffic as a result of US 12 expansion. Unless WisDOT works closely with Dane county to limit development also! Along this corridor these roads will be lost forever. By simply looking at a map you can see all of the town roads that will experience increased traffic as they become feeders to the expanded US 12. Quite sad really. All of the engineers/planners working on this project should travel by bike throughout this region exploring these roads for what they are... before deciding their fate.

- I drive US 12 between Middleton and Sauk City several times a week. I DO NOT want it expanded to four lanes. Very often, I compare driving experiences driving to Merrimac via 12 with those of people using the Interstate. They report more delays, more vehicles in the ditch, etc., than I see along US 12. Freeways promote careless driving as well as suburban sprawl. We don't need either.
- Two comments that directly affect livability in Dane County (and surrounding counties) for generations to come: Reduce, where ever possible, the ability of auto traffic to get on and off the four-lane highway. This will reduce sprawl-development pressure on lands adjacent to US 12. In particular, I support the recent revision that eliminates the Lodi-Springfield Road interchange. Lodi-Springfield is one of the last remaining jewels for ,bicycle travel to northern Dane County. An interchange with US 12 will destroy the calm, low-traffic nature of this rural road. Eliminate rumble strips along all wide shoulders. Rumble strips are a hazard to bicyclists who will be using stretches of US 12.
- I very much appreciate the consideration for cyclists in this project. Overall, I am opposed to a four lane U.S. primarily because a safe two lane alternative was never fairly considered and environmental impacts of this project were drastically underestimated. That said, I offer the following modest improvements to this project in the best interest of the community:

When Governor Thompson highlighted the biotechnology industry in his state of the State address, he was empowered to do so because of the success of local businesses in this growing segment of our economy. That success is sustained by the high quality of life in Dane County. The biotech industry in Madison competes with similar activities in California and Washington State. We can do so because we have a beautiful city and accessible rural surroundings. Maggie Smith, while Vice President of Operations at the Genetics Computer Group in Madison wrote:

"My company, Genetics Computer Group (located in the University Research Park) has hired 10 new people over the last year and it is certainly the case that 80% of our new hires as well as our current staff of 25 bike to work on an occasional or frequent basis. The topic of biking comes up at almost every job interview and we have even taken job candidates out to see the a bikable/E countryside."

Western Dane County has been written about in national magazines because of the wondrous road biking that exists so close to Madison. Dane County Executive Kathy Falk has recognized the importance of rural connections and preservation of rural routes. Design Dane! defines ways to protect these rural connections:

"Create a 'Rural Scenic Byways' designation. In partnership with towns, designate town and county roads that are intended to remain two-lane, low-volume, scenic, rural highways. Limit access and expansion along these roads and set development standards along the corridor. Provide a system of

incentives for participation. This program could help to prevent the need for costly future expansions and preserve corridor vistas, scenic bike routes, community separation and farmland."

There are two roads that are particularly useful for cyclists and may be negatively impacted by this project. I urge you to remove the connection from US 12 to Lodi Springfield Road as well as the connection to Schneider Road. Schneider road would be an ideal candidate for "Rural Scenic Byway" because it is the last rural road that connects Madison to the celebrated driftless area of western Dane County. Likewise Lodi Springfield Road provides cyclists with a lovely rural route to northern Dane County.

I also oppose the use of rumble strips on the segments of the project with 10-foot paved shoulders. These sections are designed to be used by commuting cyclists which is good. Unfortunately rumble strips create hazards for cyclists. These strips have taken cyclists down, broken bones, and forced some cyclists to bike in the roadway to avoid being trapped on debris filled shoulders with no escape (especially on hills).

I truly appreciate the thought given to cyclists and pedestrians in this project especially at the bridges.